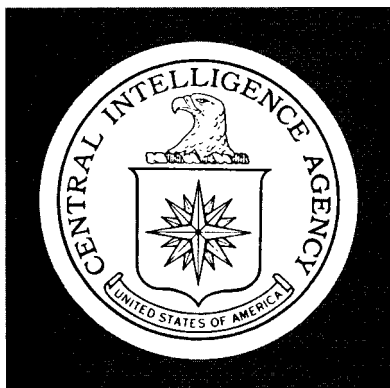


Top Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

Developments in Indochina

DOS REVIEW
COMPLETED

DIA review(s) completed.

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Top Secret
137

30 September 1970

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30 September 1970

To the Recipients of "The Situation in Cambodia":

The CIA report, "The Situation in Cambodia," has been superseded by a new daily publication-- "Developments in Indochina." The new report is designed to replace both the Vietnam and Cambodian situation reports and to give the conflict in Indochina a more comprehensive daily treatment.

Deliveries will be timed for the opening of business each day.

NOTE

"Developments in Indochina" is designed to replace the daily Vietnam and Cambodian Situation Reports, and to give the broadened conflict in Indochina a more comprehensive daily treatment.

Broader in scope and more flexible in format, it will for the first time permit treatment of events in Laos on a regular basis. Reporting on significant military and political developments will continue as before, but greater emphasis will be placed on attempting to understand trends and connections between events in various countries.

The new publication will be disseminated to all the recipients of its two predecessors.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

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NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi is putting forth a soft-line version of the Viet Cong's eight points among Vietnamese in Paris in hopes of arousing interest in the proposal and of mustering support for the notion that the Communists have tabled something new and worthwhile.

LAOS

There is still a possibility of substantive peace negotiations in Laos.

CAMBODIA

Cambodian enthusiasm and determination for carrying the war to the Communists have made a strong positive impression on a British pacification expert.

SOUTH VIETNAM

Lower House Deputy Ngo Cong Duc, whose peace plan excited Saigon during the past two weeks, has returned from a visit to Paris to defend his proposals.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi has quietly floated the notion in the Vietnamese community in Paris that the tough line in the Viet Cong's new eight-point position should not be taken at face value.

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[redacted] soft line almost certainly was tailored to arouse the interest of the Vietnamese community in Paris and to muster support for the idea that the Communists have put something new and worth exploring on the negotiating table. Beyond that, however, Communist motives are obscure. It could have been a cautious, circuitous way of sounding out Saigon's willingness to bargain, or at least of discovering whether some officials within the Thieu government are willing to bargain. This kind of pitch was made very blatantly to individual government officials in the eight points.

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LAOS

There is still a possibility of substantive peace negotiations in Laos. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has acceded to the Communist demand that he send a letter to Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong, formally appointing Pheng Phongsavan as his representative for the next phase of the talks. In doing so, however, Souvanna refused to meet the Communists' parallel requirements that he make the appointment in his capacity as "prince," rather than as head of a government which they do not recognize. Nevertheless, the letter once again puts the ball back in Souphanouvong's court and may, by meeting part of their demands, serve as a test of Communist intentions with respect to the negotiations.

If the talks at Khang Khay do get under way, there is a chance that the British and Soviet ambassadors would be present in their capacity as Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Accords for Laos.

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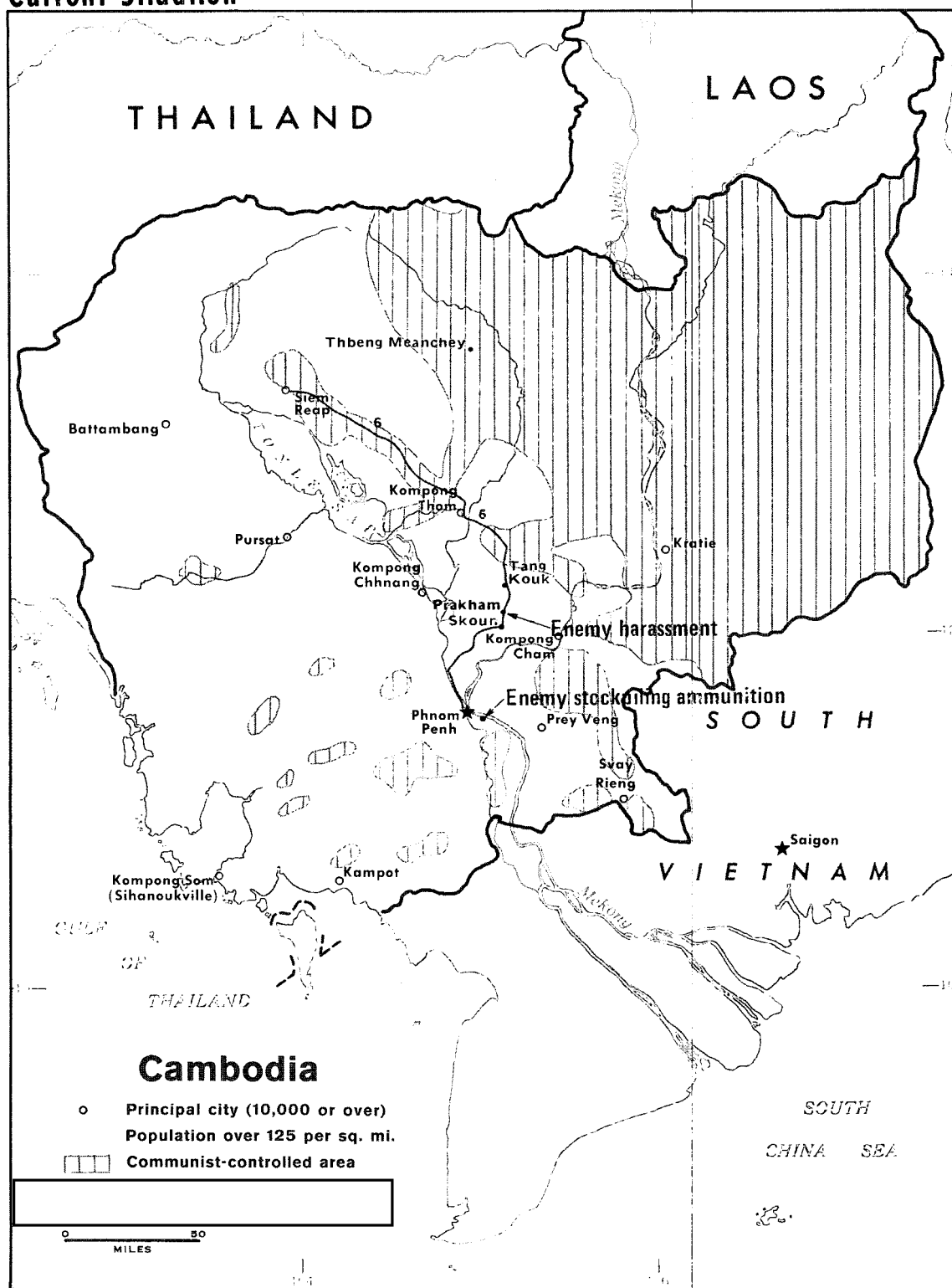
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Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

US Ambassador Swank reports that Sir Robert Thompson, the British pacification specialist, came away from his recent two-day visit to Phnom Penh impressed by the fighting spirit and resolution of the government and its supporters. Sir Robert received detailed briefings from Cambodian officials on the military situation and on the government's pacification plans. In his meeting with Sir Robert, Lon Nol displayed his customary confidence that the Cambodians will defeat the Communists. The Cambodian leader did, however, express some concern over the proselyting efforts of "Viet Cong - trained Khmer" in the countryside.

As a result of his brief observations, Sir Robert told the ambassador that a "dollar spent in Cambodia should go more than twice as far as one spent in Vietnam." He added that he will recommend to London that it extend economic aid to Cambodia, not on purely economic grounds, "but as a political gesture to a country which is defending itself valiantly against an aggressor."

The Military Situation

The Communists are continuing their minor harassing attacks on the government column on Route 6. The position of one government battalion was hit by enemy mortar fire on 29 September, and elements of three other battalions clashed briefly with a small Communist unit two miles southeast of the village of Prakham. Few casualties resulted, however, and air strikes halted the enemy action.

There was very little military activity throughout the rest of the country. Cambodian military

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authorities in Phnom Penh are concerned, however, that there may be some sort of an enemy attack near the capital during the current religious holiday. They cite recent reports that claim the Communists have been moving ammunition into an area just three miles southeast of the city, on the west bank of the Mekong. Although the US Defense Attaché agrees that the enemy may attempt some terrorist attacks, he does not believe any large scale action is imminent.

Army Officers Dissatisfied

Many Cambodian Army officers are upset over the recent execution of the former military governor of Kampot Province on grounds that he had collaborated with the Communists.

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[redacted] believe that the sentence was too harsh, particularly because there are still many senior officers in Lon Nol's entourage who also have profited from their prior Communist connections. Many of the disgruntled officers apparently are unwilling to be sent to the front as a result of this episode.

Lon Nol's approval of this unusually severe punishment probably was influenced by the continuing clamor from youth and other groups for determined government action against corruption in the military and elsewhere. Although the execution may have been well received in some circles, it has apparently cost the prime minister some more important army support.

Communist Activity in the Far North

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[redacted]
[redacted] the Communists are in complete

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[REDACTED]

control of the provincial capital, Thbeng Meanchey. Well-equipped enemy troops infiltrating from Laos use the town as a way-station en route to Kompong Thom and Siem Reap. They only remain for a few hours, however.

The 300 enemy troops who are garrisoned in the town have organized a locally recruited guard force to conduct patrols. In addition, they have tried to win local good will by appointing a number of former Cambodian military personnel to "responsible" local positions.

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[REDACTED] more than half of the townspeople have fled Thbeng Meanchey since government troops abandoned it in late July. Few have returned. Food is scarce because many outlying farmers--fearing air strikes--refuse to work their fields, and others have decamped because of Communist-dictated quotas.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Lower House Deputy Ngo Cong Duc, whose peace plan has excited Saigon during the past two weeks, has returned from a visit to Paris to defend his proposals. Duc appeared to retreat from two of the most controversial points in his plan at a press conference in Saigon on 29 September. In clarifying his original position, he opened some distance between himself and the Communists by denying that he advocated Viet Cong participation in a provisional government and by asserting that North Vietnamese forces as well as US troops should withdraw from South Vietnam. Duc, however, continued to express views harshly critical of the Thieu government and reiterated his call for the participation of a fifth delegation composed of South Vietnamese peace advocates in the Paris talks.

Duc's clarification may dampen some of the furor over his plan. According to press reports, however, government officials warned some Vietnamese editors not to publish accounts of the press conference. Moreover, many politicians have continued to denounce Duc, and there have been demonstrations against him, apparently arranged by the government, in several more provincial capitals. President Thieu said on 26 September that Duc would be in jail if he were not protected by parliamentary immunity and asserted that the Lower House should take care of punishing him.

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